



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Alaska National Guardsmen rescue bear mauling victim

CAMP DENALI, Alaska—Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons rescued a man, in the early morning hours of Aug. 16, who was mauled by a brown bear 30 nautical miles north of Anaktuvuk Pass.

Initially the North Slope Bureau Search and Rescue Department deployed teams that attempted to reach the victim, who was part of a guided hunting party, on multiple occasions by helicopter but were turned back because of dense fog in the area. After the North Slope Bureau's final attempt to reach the victim was again hampered by weather, they called the Alaska State Troopers requesting assistance. Ultimately, Troopers were unable to execute the mission also because of the poor weather conditions.

The 11th Air Force Rescue Coordination Center contacted Troopers and the North Slope Bureau Aug. 15 regarding another ongoing mission and realized the two agencies were having difficulty reaching this bear mauling victim.

According to the RCC, the man had been suffering for approximately 36 hours with severe injuries and possible loss of life, so the RCC offered assistance to Troopers and the North Slope Bureau with the mission. Both accepted the offer and requested the RCC to proceed.

The Alaska Air National Guard's 211th Rescue Squadron launched an HC-130 King aircraft from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson with an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter crew onboard from the 210th Rescue Squadron along with Guardian Angel pararescue teams from the 212th Rescue Squadron.

"The HC-130 transported the HH-60 aircrew and Guardian Angels to Eielson Air Force Base where a Pave Hawk helicopter was prepositioned," said Master Sgt. Armando Soria, a search and rescue controller with the 11th Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. "It is a common practice to save on fuel and to maximize our required crew rest."

By 12:27 a.m. Aug. 16, both the HC-130 and HH-60, with Guardian Angel teams on both airframes, launched from Eielson en route to the location of the victim and arrived on site shortly before 3 a.m.

The victim, who had sustained severe blood loss, was stabilized by medical professional who happened to be in a neighboring hunting group.

"The medical professional was able to get to the victim shortly after the attack," Soria said. "He was able to decrease the blood loss and maintain life until help could arrive. The pararescuemen credit him for saving the man's life. He provided expert care with limited resource for several hours, ultimately stabilizing, warming and rehydrating the victim."

The Pave Hawk was able to land near the site, and the patient was loaded onto the helicopter for transport to Fairbanks.

The Guardian Angel team onboard the Pave Hawk continued to stabilize the victim on the flight back, and he was delivered to medical care on the ground at Eielson Air Force Base at 4:55 a.m., then transferred to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital via ambulance. Fog on the ground at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital prevented the helicopter from landing directly there.

According to the RCC, the mission was made difficult because the weather in Anaktuvuk Pass dropped from scattered ceilings at 7,500 feet when the crews departed Anchorage to overcast ceilings at 400 feet when they were leaving Eielson.

Further, the crews were operating during the darkest part of night-time hours on night vision goggles. The HC-130 had to dispense illumination flares to help the helicopter crew get through the pass and find the site and guide them back through the pass on the return. The HC-130 also flew ahead of the HH-60 to find the best weather and provided fuel between cloud layers at night to the helicopter.

The Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were awarded one save for this mission.

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